

A PRIMER ON THE  
POLICYMAKING PROCESS  
OF A  
TYPICAL LARGE PUBLIC ORGANIZATION

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## IN PREFACE

For this paper a large public organization was studied for some months from the standpoint of its change and policy systems. The paper reviews these matters in both a theoretical and operational sense. The product of this endeavor is this small primer on the organizational policy process. It is hoped that the primer will offer guidance to persons interested in reviewing the policy system in a given organization or concerned about organizational policymaking in general. The primer focuses attention on relevant policy phases typical of large contemporary agencies. Illustrations of problems are drawn from the subject agency. It is anticipated that more attention to changing and policy processes will strengthen the relevance of agency programs to today's and tomorrow's problems.

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## INTRODUCTION

During the past few years we have seen a rising crescendo of interest in the public policy process, due largely to our awareness that we are failing, in certain significant ways, to develop policy of quality proportionate to the size of the problems which plague us. While some of the current interest is addressed to the general political milieu, a fair portion is focused on the policy responsibilities of public agencies. Many scholars and observers of public performance today are becoming aware of the responsibility as well as the potential of the agency in relation to the policy alternatives in its substantive field. In many areas the expertness located within the agency is the only legitimate source of policy interpretation, innovation and development. The need is to formulate means whereby this capability of the agency can be optimized in a systematic manner--literally as part of the routine performance of agency activities.

In these remarks, our concern is with the agency as a policy-refining, policy-affecting entity in the day-to-day administration of its program. We are not here concerned with the agency officials as political persons interacting with legislative, executive and clientele representatives in a political force-field. While such activity is clearly relevant to the public policy process and the role of the public administrator, this is a familiar relationship. Too often left unstipulated and unstudied is the potential of the agency as a policy-affecting system at the very heart of the substantive program-area. It is with the specification of such a system that this paper is concerned.

We propose to present a means whereby the agency may exercise responsible leadership in policy-building within its area of concern--and do this within the confines of existing political institutions.

In this paper a "policy system" is sketched which relates many more dimensions of the agency's form and process to the achievement of capability for innovation, change, and learning than has typically been the case in writings on this subject. A large public agency, presumably reasonably typical, has been studied and is used as an example throughout this paper.

The subject agency is technically oriented, as typifies an increasing proportion of public programs today. It is heavily staffed with technical and professional people. Its activities are set in a context--and on a scale--which makes it highly visible throughout the world. The organization has established a broad reputation for effectiveness; there is every indication that through the years its activities have been handled wisely and well. Its leadership has consistently manifested a high level of sophistication in matters of public administration; many of its top administrators are people with national reputations in administrative circles. In sum, this is a significant organization, which makes its use as an example of needs in the policy area all the more appropriate.

Rather than using a caricature organization or one which is conspicuously in difficulty we have chosen a great contemporary public agency to observe to determine how it fits the image we are presenting of an appropriate policy system for large organizations in today's--and tomorrow's--world. The organization is not mentioned by name since to do so would offer an out to other organizations doing different jobs in different contexts. We believe the subject organization is more typical than otherwise, that it fairly illustrates the manner in which many very large and apparently successful organizations have neglected their

internal policy system to the extent that the organization has drifted out of precise congruency with its environment. The subject organization is perceived as representing a large proportion of our most significant public organizations in its failure to give sufficient attention to policy-building processes to assure control over the organization's own future! Obscuring the agency's name thus represents our desire to emphasize the lesson rather than the situation.

This paper does not include many details about the subject agency's internal processes. This is because such details are of little interest to persons outside the agency, nor are they pertinent to the argument on policy-building set forth here. Further, emphasis on such details may offer a scapegoat--trivial errors of facts--for persons wishing to fault the overall argument. A general approach is perceived as more appropriate for the outsider serving a short period of observation inside a large organization. Such an approach allows the observer freedom to set down his thoughts without being overly concerned about probable minor errors. Within the general argument, officials of any agency may make their own accommodation, relying upon their knowledge of their own program and procedures to effect a proper application of the theme. We believe there is much in this report which may be applied to any large, technical public organization.

We have also refrained from documenting the argument developed in this paper. This facilitates the presentation of the argument in that it can be set forth without concern about integration of various complementary positions. On the other hand, this risks the proper allocation of credit for ideas significant to the presentation. With this in mind, but with awareness that this is an inadequate gesture which is acceptable only in the operational terms for which this paper is intended, we set forth a brief bibliographical notation. Calling attention first to the selected bibliography which accompanies this paper, we draw specific reference to Professor Yehezkel Dror

of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. In his book, Public Policymaking Reexamined, Dr. Dror sets forth an exceptionally well-formulated "optimal model" of the policymaking process, much of it clearly relevant to the responsibilities of the agency and the public administrator. This paper draws most heavily on Professor Dror's work.

Also in the bibliography but requiring specific mention here are the works by Mr. John Gardner and Professors Bennis and Slater. Both of these volumes added many insights into the author's perception of what is happening in the policy world today and what may need to be done about these developments.

This paper reflects its author's conviction that the policy process has been too narrowly conceived by most writers; it has been interpreted in terms too political to supply a proper guide for public administrative organizations. A brief explanation of these comments may prove useful.

The policy process is too often restricted to problems associated with choice--how a decision is made when alternatives are available. We find sponsors of "comprehensive-rational" decision procedures, of "satisficing," of "muddling through," of "mixed scanning," and still other possibilities. Clearly, these models are important in comprehending what we are getting at here, since they relate to the degree of precision and control that one may achieve in policy choices. At the same time, none of them goes sufficiently into the network of organizational forms and processes which surround and support the policy process to reveal the process in total-system terms.

In this paper we will look at the elements of the total system which supports policy-building in the subject organization; we will not look at the process per se. Further, we will try to avoid getting too deeply involved

in the dialogue about models, although we certainly cannot escape this altogether. On models, we take the position that the policy process must be accepted in part as incremental, since it builds marginally on what is already there, but the process can be subjected to more advanced levels of control and direction than have typically been achieved.

Mr. Charles Lindblom's small book, The Policy Making Process, will give perplexed readers a fine comprehension of the issues to which these remarks are addressed. Suffice to say, the central question is whether the policy process can in fact be subjected to rational controls or whether it is inevitably and committedly a non-rational, political process which is in a real sense "out of control." Our position in this paper is "both" rather than "either, or." The process does include determinedly political elements, yet it is also subjectable to rational processes in many of its specific dimensions.

This leads us back to our observation that the process has been accepted as essentially political, which fails to supply a proper guide for administrative organizations. This is intended to imply that administrators must be willing to acknowledge to a larger extent than many now do, the separation of powers concept. We must further organize our administrative agencies to support the political process rather than become immersed in it. We must, further, offer persons who are at the political decision level as much assistance as possible so that their decisions can be wise in terms of the realities of the situation with which they are concerned. This implies that the agency must develop its capacity for monitoring its own experience as well as the world to which it relates in order to achieve a real-time sense of where it stands in relation to its own needs, plans, goals, problems, etc., so that it is in a strong position to offer counsel to legislative policymakers.

It has become popular to assume that Lindblom's conception of the "science of muddling through" lets everyone off the sharp hook represented by the need to learn what is happening, has happened, and is likely to happen, and to make good, hard, well-conceived recommendations to policy-makers. In effect, we are all a bit relieved to be told that a rational, comprehensive approach is impossible and that all we can hope to do is proceed through an ad hoc process of limited comparisons. Yet if the agencies, with their capabilities and program knowledge, don't assume responsibility for achieving as high an awareness as possible of their own experience, needs, and possibilities, who can--and who will? This paper is premised on the notion that while there are many ways in which the agency official must behave politically, he is not excused from responsibility for using the agency's resources to build the strongest policy recommendations possible. His political role does not free him to reject this responsibility because of his own sense of political expediency. In this respect his commitment to the public interest requires performance considerably different from that expected of elected politicians.

A fair case can be made for the idea that the reason why so many of our areas of public policy concern are in such difficulty today is because program officials have become too deeply immersed in the force field, the political environment, surrounding their programs and too little involved with learning about the program itself. They have made concessions to the vagaries of the political winds rather than developing a sharply defined, reasoned, policy for their agency which they could sponsor publicly with confidence. This paper assumes that the agency abrogates its public responsibility when it shies away from or waters down recommendations clearly needed in its substantive area on the basis of political judgments about

feasibility, salability, etc. The agency should muster its resources and concentrate its attention on the development of the strongest possible program recommendations, and its officers should promote these recommendations with every resource they can muster.

For the agency, whatever its substantive interest, to do this, attention must be paid to literally every phase of the agency's structure and process. These must be analyzed from the standpoint of their contribution to the policybuilding process in the organization. In order for typical agencies to have a well-defined frame of reference for such an analysis, we suggest the critique should be made in terms of the need for adaptive capability in the organization. While it is often difficult or even impossible for an organization to appraise its own procedures from the standpoint of their contribution to policy-building, it is relatively simple for an organization to review its units and systems in terms of their contribution to organizational learning and change capability.

With this in mind, we will consider relevant dimensions of a typical large public organization, commenting on these from the standpoint of change capability. This appears to be a viable frame of reference; it clearly relates to developments which have become conspicuous in our society and which have overtones relating to organizational survival.

#### THE NEED FOR CHANGE CAPABILITY

Many things are happening in the world today and in the American society which imply that tomorrow's world will be vastly different from the one we know. There is no need to dwell on this, since much has been written about it and responsible people everywhere are turning attention to the implied problems. On the other hand, a few trends which are especially evident and which relate to the policy process of our subject organization are worthy of mention.

One very conspicuous development relates to the proliferation of knowledge plus our increasing capacity to store, retrieve and use knowledge. A number of matters are involved here. On the one hand, this development means that the organization can in fact draw more on real knowledge in its policy and decision processes. It means, too, that the organization can expect to have among its members a large number of professional-type employees, with all the promises and problems such employees bring with themselves. Further, it means that for the non-professional, the person who is not part of the "knowledge revolution" of our time, there is the continuing risk of obsolescence. This risk also involves the professionals themselves, of course, since to stay abreast of their fields they must continually upgrade themselves. The proliferation of knowledge presents entire organizations with the possibility, not heretofore as conspicuous in man's affairs, of being rendered obsolete by a new development, invention, product, or way of doing things. In sum, this development offers man a great deal, yet it has vast implications, many of them distinctly negative, for the policy processes of organizations.

Another noteworthy change which is very important as an indicator of tomorrow's world is the discontent among the youth of today. While granting that a degree of fashion attends this kind of development, we submit that evidence supports the notion that there is revolution of sorts in the current movements. We must accept the fact that much that was real and relevant for the pre-World War II generation has little meaning for young people today. Many of the values as well as much of the knowledge and skills of the older third of the population today (including most of the contemporary "establishment") have little real relevance to the world in which our children and grandchildren will mature. These young people have become so used to growth and accelerated change, so used to short time-spans, that

little or nothing seems permanent or sacred to them. They have only the most limited comprehension or perception of the beliefs or value systems which guides their elders. While de Tocqueville noted over a century ago the prevailing openness with which Americans raised their children, the pattern has escalated immeasurably in the past fifteen years. The changes which are shaking up the youth in Japan, China, Eastern Europe, Brazil, France and England are at least as shattering to the affluent, mobile, well-fed, well-educated youth of the United States. They have had more time to read, to observe and to think; their liberal educations cause them to look critically upon their elder's failures to resolve some of the conspicuous social problems of this period; they do not want to fall into lock-step, uncritically accepting a condition they did not create and do not like. They will soon be staffing the public and private organizations that make up our world.

Another area of change which merits mention here is the increase in levels of employment in some industries at the expense of others. For example, employment in education has increased since 1960 more than the total number of persons employed in the steel, copper and aluminum industries; the increase in the number employed in the health field is greater than the total number employed in mining in 1960; and so on. People are moving toward more complex jobs, jobs requiring higher levels of education and training. In the larger urban centers the proportion of employed people with college educations is approaching two-thirds. Meanwhile, millions of people are participating in adult education and mid-career development programs.

Seemingly, increased mobility accompanies increased education, the higher level of professionalism and the improved income which are a feature of our period. All of these trends are expected to escalate. Deterioration of urban life, the desire for self-maximization, the search for opportunities for professional growth, the need for better schools, all these and many

additional conditions will make it increasingly difficult to induce people into an organization, make their work interesting, and retain them on the payroll.

We are seeing an almost instant application of new ideas, with the time lag between concept and use dropping from over fifty years to less than five in the last one-hundred years or so. Associated with this is the obsolescence which plagues so many organizations and so many employees of organizations. The challenge for renewal is clear.

These paragraphs are intended only to suggest some of the many dramatic changes which are occurring around us. A number of books have appeared recently which are addressed to "social indicators" and offer rather clear impressions of things to come. They cannot, of course, answer specific questions for particular organizations, but they do supply the wherewithal for well-educated guesses. Their overall message appears to be that many things are in fact happening which are vastly different from anything man has known before. While many people would like to believe "the more things change the more they are the same" or to shrug off the implications with comments about how conditions have always been changing, the clear evidence suggests that our contemporary situation is indeed new and in the nature of its newness it imposes challenges on cultures, societies, jurisdictions, organizations and individuals which can only be met with growth, learning, increased capability, new directions and new goals. The implications for large technical public organizations, so typically bureaucratic and change-resistant, are overwhelmingly clear.

#### CHANGE CAPABILITY AND THE POLICYMAKING PROCESS

An assumption is implicit in the preceding section which should be spelled out. We believe it imperative to recognize that the policy process is intimately associated with change, that one cannot deal with the latter

without the former. Policymaking per se does not necessarily involve change (it may imply rubber-stamping existing practice) but change does involve policy. The point here is to emphasize that to create a learning, coping, adapting, renewing organizational system requires a policymaking process which is built with these objectives in mind.

Our too brief sketch of changes now in process, with their implications for a far different future, relate to a few writings mentioned in the bibliography. I am speaking of the works of Amitai Etzioni (The Active Society), by John Gardner (Self-Renewal), and Warren Bennis and Philip Slater (The Temporary Society). These books are getting at some of the notions we want to establish in this paper. Etzioni sponsors the need to develop capability for shaping the future in an active fashion. Reviewing him in grossly reduced terms, he argues for an acting rather than reacting society, for organizations which marshall their capacities to learn in real-time terms what is happening and is likely to happen, to make plans and programs which lead into the future rather than being forced into it. Etzioni argues that most organizations are more passive than active, inclined to favor the status quo even in the midst of a hurricane. In a chapter on "mixed scanning" he shows means for decision-making and policy-building which go far beyond incrementalism while at the same time accepting some of the "political realities" which underlie Lindblom's argument. Etzioni assumes that each of us and each organization is in a time spectrum where in the future can be made nearly as real as the past by the careful monitoring of selected information and experience. He recognizes the absurdity of purely rational-comprehensive models but argues the merits of thorough analysis of more data than are typically appraised by most organizations at the present time.

Gardner's book, written for a much larger audience, notes the decay, the atrophy, the obsolescence of so many of us as individuals today, of our

organizations and jurisdictions. He blames this on our failure to develop means of change, of renewal. In very lucid terms he spells out the kinds of things which need to be done to overcome the problems he describes. Gardner is arguing for much the same thing as Etzioni--the need to recognize what is going on and to develop programs which offer a chance to direct events in an active way rather than fighting them, succumbing to them, or reacting when it is too late.

Bennis and Slater are in the same guere as these other two men. They review certain trends which social indicators suggest are developing, and they speculate on the implications of these for the organization of the future. Their summary position is that the kinds of capabilities we are developing, in terms of both human and technical resources, will move us away from structured, controlled, rational and predictable organizations toward loose, open, ad hoc and temporary arrangements established to deal with problems of a less permanent nature than characterized past organizations.

These authors--and many others--reveal the intimate relationship which exists between the policy process and change capability. While the relationship is apparent, it needs specification, perhaps for its very obviousness, since it is at the heart of what we are trying to get at as we look at the large public organization today. We believe it reasonable to infer that the organizations which grow stronger and thrive in the new environments which are coming will be those which possess the capability to develop policies which represent reappraisals and new directions. For an organization to do this, to develop this capability, will require attention to the policy process per se and to the various dimensions of the organization itself as it supports the policy process. It will require the development of changing organizations.

## THE CONCEPT OF A POLICY SYSTEM

As we consider the policy process we find ourselves increasingly aware that what we are really dealing with is a complex network, organization-wide, which in its totality shapes the policy of the organization. Just as in the production of such a thing as an automobile, the whole force of the organization is systematically studied and structured to complement the production process, so for the creation or production of effective policy the entire organization must be appraised in policy-building terms. This is not to say that it is organized for policy-building at the expense of its purpose; rather, it is to say that the organization's capacity to adapt, learn and renew itself should be considered a vital process along with its capacity to achieve its substantive goal. Such a consideration would have a dramatic affect on many features of typical organizations today. Our remarks on our subject organization are premised on the assumption that the leadership of the organization was interested in its capability to learn, to grow in wisdom and maturity, to adapt and to renew itself in real-time terms, and we are addressing ourselves to these features of the organization. In effect, we are considering the policy process as a network reaching all parts of the structure, and we are viewing it as a process which must offer the organization a capacity to adapt in a nimble way to the realities of a world which is changing at a fantastic rate.

In the sections which follow we propose to comment on the many dimensions of the total organizational system which we perceive to be intimately associated with the policy-building problem. We will, of course, do this in terms of our perceptions of the illustrative public organization we observed.

## THE POLICY SYSTEM IN THE SUBJECT BUREAUCRACY

The policy system is discussed under four general headings which are entitled Organizational Elements, Policy on Policy, Mechanics of Policymaking, and Follow-Up Processes. The remarks are organized around sub-headings believed to be relevant to the policy process. Readers are reminded that these sub-categories are designed to relate specifically to change capability, the organization's ability to maintain its strength, viability, and leadership as the world around it changes.

### Organizational Elements

This is a catchall heading under which are included a number of matters pertinent to our theme. We note in advance our humility in commenting on many of these after so brief an exposure to the subject organization. We are acutely aware that the practices we observed are results of experience, need, and wisdom and we interject our thoughts mainly to raise questions. We are all aware that organizations do become stereotyped, that practices which once had a purpose are carried on despite their obsolescence, that members tend to fight to maintain dead systems, and that in many ways most organizations need to be upgraded now and then.

Structural matters. Many contemporary organizations have "opened up" their organization structure in order to share complex burdens and to stimulate the flow of ideas and information. A "team approach" is increasingly evident in top management levels. Many observers predict the final demise of the "one-man" organization, the "cult of personality." Such an organization is viewed as incompatible with the egalitarianism of the professional-type organization which is proliferating today, wherein rank and status considerations diminish in favor of open exchange and individual capability. Further, most organizations today are simply too large and too complex to retain traditional hierarchical leadership arrangements. In critiquing this

in the subject organization we are simply emphasizing that in policy system terms the traditional hierarchy inhibits openness, the natural movement of qualified people to locations where their qualifications are needed, the flow of accurate information, the willingness of idea-oriented people to remain in the system, the ambitions of strong people, and so on. Experimentation with team leadership, when the opportunity arises, should strengthen policy-building capability in the organization.

More than fifteen years have elapsed since our illustrative organization altered its organization structure in any substantial fashion. While one is naturally inclined to accept and live with a successful venture, the procedures, values, communication patterns, leadership structures, personal involvements, etc., which develop around a given structure become extremely set, rigid, and imprisoning in fairly short order. Change for the sake of change seems questionable, yet the problem of renewal may imply just that. The policy system is weakened by the continual manipulation which breaks up existing means of interaction, dialogue, problem-solving, and program execution, but it is strengthened by occasional shake-ups which require rethinking of priorities, values, relationships, goals, procedures, and so forth.

The physical spaces occupied by an organization relate to the policy system in the sense that they tend to communicate to member and public something of the organization's values and self-image. In this context, the new space which was being built for our subject agency at the time of our study is perceived as offering a fine opportunity. While many offices in the space convey the impression of a successful activity with self-esteem and a stake in the world, others have the appearance of tired bureaucracy where neither member nor client can possibly muster any excitement, to say nothing of a new idea. The current building, a converted warehouse (which is still largely used for its original purpose), hardly can be construed to be a proper setting for an exciting, forward-looking organization.

The architecture of a building can compliment or reduce the lives of the people using it; it can stimulate them or stultify them. This is a factor of aesthetics, of line and form and color; and it is a factor of layout, of work arrangements, spatial relationships, flow, interaction, openness, flexibility, etc. The research on this kind of matter should be considered as offices and other spaces in the new building are arranged to accommodate this agency.

Thus far, I have briefly touched matters of physical space, organization structure, and the management team. All of these relate to the policy system in a rather direct fashion when that system is visualized in terms of organizational learning and changing capability.

Executive development. The means employed by an organization to develop new executive strength is of obvious pertinence to the policy system. In theory, executives may be developed who are forward-looking, adaptable and open. To achieve this, people of top quality are recruited, socialized and trained. They are given a varied series of learning experiences. They work on organizational problems, develop both line and staff operating experience and rather swiftly are moved into positions which are sufficiently rewarding in professional and financial terms to hold them in the organization. This process is expensive for the organization, requiring considerable planning and supervision; it imposes strain on the whole system, and difficult accommodations. But the reward normally justifies the effort. The system should feed into the management circles a variety of highly qualified people with awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, a desire to change it (perhaps to improve it), and enough youth left to dream and hope, to imagine something better. The process is clearly of central importance to the overall policy system.

In the subject organization, there appears to be a fairly well-devised executive development program, but there are certain problem areas which should be overcome if possible. Many of the best young people recruited into the organization do not stay, apparently because they do not feel there is as good an opportunity for them as they had anticipated. Some who have remained suggest that the system is far more structured and bureaucratic than they had imagined it would be, and they are very much aware of slow turnover in the upper management levels.

In recent years the personnel department has sponsored a mobility program which has been useful in broadening participant awareness of problems and skills in different parts of the agency. This is a vital aspect of management development and should doubtless be extended.

Two additional practices might be tried which would have a similar effect and would contribute to policy building. A number of local corporations are experimenting with "Venture Teams" (V-Teams) which are small teams established with representation from the "lower-upper" management of appropriate departments and staff units with the objectives of seeking likely new areas into which their firms might properly venture. They are well-supported by the firms so they can do their job, and they work against deadlines. Members of the V-Teams retain their regular jobs, dividing their time to meet both tasks. A corporation president with whom this experiment was discussed said that his organization's use of this procedure was too new to have a track record at the present time but they were very enthusiastic about the program on two counts: executive development and policy planning.

Another technique which has proven useful in other settings is the use of task forces for problem-solving. A temporary, part-time team is appointed which represents pertinent parts of the organization. The team is made up of sharp, developing, middle-level managers and staff persons. Task force

members continue to do their regular jobs but also assume responsibility for working with the Task Force to study an organizational dilemma and make a considered recommendation. The task force system may be devised so that one or more such groups is always working at some key problem in the organization. Wherever possible these groups should make their final presentations to top management. This gives their work visibility and importance, cautions them to perform as professionally and responsibly as possible, presents these important parts of the organization with new ideas and perspectives, and introduces aspiring executives to people who might otherwise not learn to know them.

In general, while we were very much impressed by the quality of persons in management levels of the test agency, I believe the long-term needs of the organization imply further investment in executive development. This investment should take the form of time, interest, commitment, belief in the need, etc., in addition to the obvious financial cost.

Self-actualization. If we accept the notions of such persons as Abraham Maslow to the effect that man escalates up a need hierarchy as he fulfills lower level needs, then we assume that self-actualization is the need of an increasing proportion of organization members today. As people are freed from concerns of a lesser order, Maslow argues, they seek increasingly esoteric fulfillments until they find themselves mainly concerned with the maximization of themselves as persons. They seek the gratification of full personal development, of openness, freedom, expression and contribution. The more educated and skilled they are the more likely they are to have achieved this level of aspiration. We cannot categorically state that self-actualizing people are characteristic of the best organizations, but certainly the nature of the concept suggests that creativity, self-

expression, innovation, and even such qualities as dedication are correlates.\*

In any case, we see evidence that more people will expect self-actualization from their jobs in the future than have in the past, and we note that the self-actualizer seems to relate better to our notions of the proper policy system for tomorrow's organizations than the security-seekers or money-makers or anyone else on the need hierarchy. We suggest therefore increasing attention to this dimension both as policy per se and as a means of assuring stronger policy tomorrow. We would do this by the means now considered appropriate, including such techniques as sensitivity training, but we would hope to measure our results, keep track of experience elsewhere, and in additional ways improve our means. We believe that as large a proportion as possible of the employees in the organization should be subjected to fairly systematic personal consideration to appraise their nature, qualifications, needs, goals, shortcomings, etc., in order for the organization to do as much as possible to improve their experience and potential contribution. This is being done now by the personnel department--and perhaps at the most appropriate level. The organization should want to assure itself that as much of this activity is being carried along as possible.

This argument, along with the others in this section, is simply proposing that the policy process functions in an environment, that it can be no better than that environment, and that policy-building must begin with attention to the relevant dimensions of the environment. We posit the thought that the human dimension is the most critical.

Organizational processes. We cannot go very far into the use of information technology in the observed agency's system since we could develop only

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\*One commentator was so unkind as to term Maslow's concept as the newest, most chic way to express the Protestant Ethic.

limited sense of how much use is being made of the rapidly developing resources now available in this area. It has been said that as computer-based analysis is refined in the next decade or two it will make possible an advance in human intellectual capacity "comparable to the invention of language, arabic numerals, and calculus." Policy-builders will be able to explore a range of problems and alternative solutions which has always been infinitely beyond the reach of mankind. The policy process in its practical or operational sense depends upon information. To have the capability to muster vast amounts of information that are clear, timely, valid, and reliable and to direct that information to the comprehension of the knottiest problems in the organization's concern is now within our grasp. We can argue about the limits of rationality, and rationality is limited, and the inevitability of the incremental factor in decision-making, and certainly there is always an incremental element, but we must recognize that these become matters of degree. We have come a long way from studying the entrails of newly slain lambs to get indications of what to do. And we can go much further.

We cannot argue with the idea that these matters are situational, that each case depends upon its own set of circumstances and data, but this is true of every event in history. We can also readily see areas wherein such procedures as operations research, systems analysis, program planning and budgeting systems, etc., have gone awry and led to the wrong decisions. But this is their dawn period; we are just learning to do these things.

The use of these procedures offers an opportunity to make better decisions, to build stronger policy, and to share power throughout large organizations. The capabilities inherent in these processes will allow a far larger proportion of the management team to gain a comprehension of the organizational situation, the alternatives pertinent to a decision, and the effect of existing programs

and decisions. This increase in involvement is a vital part of the executive development program, the self-actualization goal, accommodation to new management needs, and the improvement of policy.

As noted, we found it difficult to judge the use and status of information systems and other related processes in this organization. We found what appeared to be a guarded cynicism in some quarters, yet we were continually aware that the subject agency has made pioneering contributions to many of these processes. In fact, it appears to have been using many of them before they were so socially acceptable as to be given fancy new names. For all of this, these processes are vital, central elements of the contemporary policy system. It is hardly conceivable that any large organization can keep up with its world without these techniques. Even Congress is getting interested in supporting its role with new information technology!

This concludes this initial section. In these pages we have considered some of the general conditions in the overall organizational system which relate directly to the organization's capacity to build effective policy. In the next section we introduce certain dimensions of the policy process per se.

#### Policy on Policy

This section is concerned with the overall conceptual scheme for policy-making, the principles and rules established for this process, and the degree to which the process is defined and spelled out. The previous section noted some general features of an organization which relate to its commitment to renewal, change and development and its overall capability to achieve these qualities. In this section our concern is with the degree to which the organization has thought through the policy system, conceptualizing it and formulating it in organizationally relevant terms. The policy process should be seen as a vital overlay which affects every unit and individual

in the system. Without proper attention, policymaking will not produce the reality-based changes and innovations which are its proper product, nor will it meet the exigencies of day-to-day activity.

Values and reality. As an initial step, the means for processing both organizational values and the reality with which the organization must live should be reviewed. Further, the manner in which the policymakers conceive problems must be considered with care.

On values, we note that organizations develop value-systems which are fairly stable through time, although parts of them change circumstantially. Similarly, members have well-defined values which vary somewhat but normally retain considerable consistency. Member values may or may not be consistent with or reenforcing of organizational values. In turn, organizational values may or may not be relevant to particular problems which confront policymakers at any given moment.

Values for the organization should be well established to form a guide for member behavior. Members should be socialized in terms of them, at least in a general way. But organizational values must regularly be reviewed for appropriateness in the current world. We are not suggesting an orderly, rational process here which fixes priorities in a detailed way. Rather, we are aware that such a step leads to rigidity and may court disaster; we feel only that actions and decisions in the organizations should be considered fairly regularly to determine what values underlay them--and these should be noted and compared with contemporary need and intent. In such a way the organizational values may be kept in reasonable juxtaposition with the times. The point is that one perceives his world in terms of his values. We formulate our image of reality through a mapping process which may be grossly affected by our value framework.

It is difficult to relate this to the test organization since a fairly long-term intimate relationship would be necessary to determine the agency's performance in this regard. The value system of the agency seemed distinctly more implicit than explicit, which gives the organization operating room but does not offer as clear a policy guide as might be desirable. Further, the value framework seemed very narrow and rather simple to this outsider. It did not appear to offer much of a range of policy alternatives, nor did it appear flexible enough to serve the changing needs of the organization in the years ahead. Perhaps the values need to be identified and critiqued from the standpoint of their usefulness in certain hypothetical circumstances which may affect the parent jurisdiction and its environment in the foreseeable future. Since policy can hardly evolve outside the organizational value system, largely mirrored in the values of the top management team, these need to be considered with more care and specificity than seems to have been employed thus far. A review of the agency's more evident values suggests they must be about what they were a couple decades ago.

Reality specification is interesting in its relevance to the policy process since reality can so obviously be objective or subjective. Policy-making functions best when the subjective images of reality held by policymakers approximate objective reality. In that situation there is a fair chance that the policies developed will have the effects desired for them.

This means that the policymaking system must be keyed to the real world; it must be capable of learning, of collecting data, keeping data up to date, and making appropriate sense of these measurements. It must have the capacity to adjust the organizational image of reality if the feedback systems reveal that to be different from the one perceived.

This is especially important for senior policymakers, such as the upper management and staff people of the subject agency. Such persons are often

buffered from objective reality by a multiple network of screens, distortions, absorptions, desires, and misrepresentations, so that they can only guess at the real situation. Normally, their reaction to this is to continue to formulate reality according to their own pre-conceptions, self-interest, biases, and expectations. This leads to poor policy or to non-policy all too often. Clearly, this is a critical matter which may or may not affect our test agency. Generally, however, it is very difficult for top people to make enough sense out of the information gathered from the system they control to perceive reality clearly. An excellent general way to strengthen policy is to improve the means whereby these top policymakers perceive it. This is partly a matter of system refinement, of course, but in some cases it may imply working with an individual top-level personality. We will not attempt to consider who in the typical organization should "bell the cat."

Problems. What is a problem? When is a problem termed a problem? Who determines these matters, and how? Images of reality are presumably compared with values, with differences implying problems. The comparison of reality with values gets immediately into the degree of objectiveness of the measure of reality; means for more careful measurement become useful. But assuming a reasonably accurate measurement, this comparison may be expected to lead toward problem specification.

The process may be aided by less rational techniques. Brainstorming, conference sessions, "hunch," intuition and other means may be useful here. The purpose is to find means of identifying problems and specifying them in ways which will lead toward solutions. Perhaps we could state that better by saying that the objective is to find and specify problems rather than await their appearance in disastrous form. The objective is also to specify those problems which are in fact the problems of the organization. Clearly, this relates to goal definition, organizational values, the information

system and to additional organizational matters too often left unrelated to the organization's policy-building capability.

As for the subject agency, the information system appears to be adequate for bringing routine matters to the attention of decision-makers and policy formers. The main questions the observer asks is whether the means is available for conditioning member views of the dimensions of organizational responsibility. There are many, many problems within the range of the agency's responsibilities, many of which have a lot to do with its public commitment, but which have not been perceived as problems relating to the organization at this stage in its history. The future may find the organization taking another, different look at many of these. Suffice to say, the observers were often non-plussed at the indifference of agency officials to matters which appeared, to outsiders, central problems in the agency's area of responsibility.

Designing the policymaking system. Development of an optimal system normally requires dividing policymaking into sub-parts so that optimization is achieved through sub-unit specialization. This usually leads to a lack of integration among the various units, as each makes sub-policies in its own terms. This means that the system has to be reviewed regularly (and occasionally redesigned) to minimize the negative effects of sub-optimization and to strengthen needed integrating mechanisms and allow for changes in the problems, values, and resources fed into the system from the environment. While non-rational processes may have some role in this process, the best strategy for redesigning the policymaking system should be sought by rational means. We note this with the aspiration that those in the center of this activity may form their own sense of how it is done in their own agency. We found this too subtle a problem to evaluate it adequately in our subject agency. We can only generalize that the business of improving the policymaking process

through systematic means is very critical for all future policy; it should not be left to chance or to ad hoc, situational whim.

Establishing strategy. As more knowledge and capability develops, certain options become available in policymaking. For the most part these relate to the degree that pure rationality or incrementalism will be employed in specific policymaking situations. This requires strategy decisions. More often than not neither alternative will be used in pure form; rather, certain stages will be handled in incremental terms while others will employ rational-analytical means. These matters are normally subject to advance determination. Questions of how much risk is involved, how much the organization can afford, and where the main capacity for objective answers rests (and where there is no such capacity) are typical in this phase. So too are considerations of values, premises, capability, know-how, etc. The idea is to learn where such systems as P.P.B.S. are useful and program them in, and where extra-rational processes are best, and prepare for them. In most phases of policymaking one of these is better than the other--but both have roles to play. The strategy is to plan which is best where in the discrete policymaking situation at hand. Again, we emphasize that this is a rational process; it depends upon organizational capability. We cannot relate this to practice in the test agency since to do so would require extensive analysis of a selection of specific cases. What evidence was available suggested, however, that the use of strategic planning based upon the best capability of the organization in the specific case is not at an optimal level and could be sharpened. This is said for three reasons: there was some evidence supporting it, it is true in most organizations, and the capacity to form this kind of strategic program has improved faster than use of it.

In this section of this report we have discussed certain elements in the policy system which are central to the system but too often overlooked in considering it. An organization cannot build an effective policy process without accounting, whether deliberately or intuitively, the matters we have mentioned here. From this point we take up certain features of the process which are more commonly comprehended as associated with it.

#### Mechanics of Policymaking

Thus far our attention has been addressed to the general or environmental elements of the policy process. In this section we propose to mention specific stages of the process, the mechanics, if you will, of policymaking. It is important to assume that certain steps or stages are vital to policy building, that these must either be present in the process or be marked absent. When they are not present certain losses are incurred; the quality of the product is reduced. Again employing the auto manufacturing process for illustration, one can readily see that a rudimentary vehicle may be constructed without using many of the parts, systems or features which distinguish the contemporary product, but a forfeit has been made for most of those eliminated.

Goal consideration. In order for policymaking to proceed in an orderly way (one which goes beyond patchwork or palliative) operational goals must be clearly stated, with some ranking of priority established. Some goals are more important than others, and the achievement of most organizational goals clearly affects other goals in the system. These matters have to be considered, but the consideration must necessarily be extra-rational some of the way. Some of these may be identified, evaluated, and ranked by rational means, but non-rational procedures are clearly relevant. Operational goals are more concerned with means than with ends, and they are not as numerous as the values identified and evaluated in the earlier stage of the policy process. This allows some objectivity in their consideration, and

the organization should be expected to muster information for this purpose. Experience, hunch, pressures and other non-rational qualities fill out the rest of the equation.

In the observed organization, as has been noted, there was a tendency to rely more on momentum and executive "feel" than on data-analysis for goal and value establishment and for ordering priorities. We are aware that there is no way to quantify this as "too much" or "too little;" we are simply noting a feeling we have about how our test organization dealt with this phase of the process. Extra-rational processes are strengthened by team approaches and by the various means already mentioned for building up the total policy-making system through personnel improvement, process refinement, ecological considerations, etc. In effect, extra-rational processes may be essentially rational by paying attention to relevant variables in the decision system. There is no way for the short-term visitor to appraise where the agency stands on this spectrum.

Developing policy alternatives. At the very heart of any approach to the policy process which presumes to improve on incrementalism is the process for developing alternatives for goal achievement. We do not need to review the arguments here, but we must make clear what is involved. Incrementalism results from the assumption that in any complex policy situation policymakers are locked in to a complex network of existing conditions which proscribe more than a tiny (incremental) adjustment at any one time. The argument holds that the policymaker is forced to reckon with the political facts of his world, the myriad of interests which preserve the status quo, and accept a satisficing adjustment rather than a "great leap" forward. Obviously, there is a lot of sense to this. Charles Lindblom, who put the label on incrementalism, argues that a hundred or a thousand incremental steps may be taken while proponents of a large step are embroiled in their (often

losing) battle. He points out that throughout society and in all corners of organizations incremental adjustments are being made regularly. Clearly, this is indisputable; we have accepted the idea that all of the various "schools" are dealing with incremental processes, that what is involved is more a matter of degree than anything else.

Those who find fault with incrementalism base their argument on the lack of definition, order, goal, or purpose evident in so many areas today. Incrementalism is a concession to the force-field which surrounds all activities. It tends to represent a feature of majoritarianism, but in fact is a system for validating the process of interest organization. Those who organize best win; "the squealing pig gets the slop." The forces being mustered against this approach are arguing that we have achieved much more ability to keep track of the multiple forces in our environment as well as the factors pertinent to goal achievement and we ought to make better use of this capability. Kenneth Boulding likened incrementalism to a drunkard staggering along "putting one incremental step after another," with no care about where he was actually going.

We do not imply lack of agreement with rational processes on the part of our subject agency. This organization appears to do more than most public agencies to appraise factors which seem to pertain to its decisions. The main question we raise with the agency's approach is "what really pertains to these decisions?" But more on that in our summary remarks.

We want to establish the notion that a reasonable search of alternatives should be made--and that this search must be carried along until some "good" solutions have been found. The pure-rational model searches all alternatives--in theory--which is clearly impossible. Our approach here searches those major alternatives which are evidently pertinent to goal achievement; the approach does not enter peripheral areas (though it may scan them), nor does it allow

fiat to exclude areas which qualified people in the system believe pertinent. The search is not satisfied at the first level of acceptability (as per Herbert Simon's concept of satisficing, where searching stops at the initial point about which consensus can be gained), but continues until some more than satisfactory, actually "good," solutions are identified. This is what Etzioni is getting at in his process of "mixed scanning" and what Dror is seeking with his "optimal model." If a "good" solution cannot be found, the resources employed in the search should be expanded or the standards for what is a good solution should be lowered.

In this area, much must be done with extra-rational means, since rational means tend to stay within established bounds and complement incrementalism. The creation of acceptable and "good" major alternatives requires a high level of creativity. Thus an initial period of brainstorming, hunch-identifying, conceptualizing, etc., is a vital precedent for more orderly (and objective) evaluations to determine feasibility.

What seems evident is the need to go a long way out, to reach for the best solutions and to sponsor these with as much logic, fact and argument as the organization can muster. It is difficult to believe we can resolve the staggering problems of our era if our public organizations do not do this. We do not believe they have the privilege to decide what is political and what is not and to sneak through with incremental, too often invisible, insignificant changes. Rather, we sponsor the notion that they must use their program expertness to find the best possible solutions and press for these, helping to educate both legislature and public to the virtues of their position (and the facts of the problem). In this process they will lose some important battles but when they win they will win in a significant way.

Our feeling, perhaps too quickly gathered, is that our subject organization does very well in developing a range of alternatives upon which to base selected

policy-building or policy-affecting decisions. This is especially true in the case of choices intimately related to the substantive program for which the agency is responsible. The agency does not appear to be doing this in many peripheral areas which observers might term relevant to the agency's interests.

As illustration, a major decision current at the time of our investigation was termed Project Blue. The project dealt with a vastly complicated, billion-dollar-cost matter with technical, social, economic, political and ecological overtones. Despite the complexity, the resources of the agency were mustered to make a vast investigation of alternatives before a decision was recommended. In the search, the agency appears to have taken into account a very broad range of possibilities, including many which were bandied in the press (to the agency's detriment) and many which were "way out" possibilities, hardly visible on the technological horizon at the time. In brief, the agency did not appear to have been narrow in its search nor circumscribed by top-level fiat. There was evidence of similar practices in many of the technical decisions close to the main stream of agency concerns.

The case may point up a shortcoming which was sensed by the observer-- the need for the organization to branch out into larger areas of social concern which are clearly related to the agency's responsibilities. At the present time, agency officials appear unaware of the potential breadth of their program's responsibilities, or they are deliberately avoiding confrontations on these matters. Some of the careful attention lavished on the Project Blue decision should be channeled into other, less conspicuous matters. Further, Project Blue appears to address the technological alternative rather than sociological dimensions of the situation.

One senses, in considering many large, technical public organizations that this is a common problem. They offer care and quality to the most evident aspects of their public charge but deliberately avoid accepting more than a narrow

interpretation of what they are supposed to do. Probably they should not be expected to push very far beyond the more evident responsibilities, since to do so would generate resistance patterns among many categories of observers. But too often such agencies appear to neglect very significant dimensions of their responsibility to the public interest.

One example is the relationship of typical metropolitan area school boards to the integration problem. Too often the boards have neglected integration while paying elaborated attention to matters of pedagogy per se. Another example may be the manner in which the Port of New York Authority sponsors its legally-prescribed program while neglecting problems of congestion and air and water pollution for which it has some causal responsibility. The California Highway Department has sliced up many established cities with freeways, assuming no responsibility for social costs incurred. There are countless such illustrations of agencies refusing to recognize more than a very narrow definition of their role and thereby imposing heavy costs on the society.

Appraising alternatives. Before the choice is made from among the alternatives which have been developed, they must be appraised in cost, feasibility, benefits, etc., terms--to the extent that this is practical. A warning is in order here, to protect our emphasis on change capability and innovation. It is evident that the more an alternative deviates from the prosaic and the further it is from the simply incremental, the more difficult it will be to appraise it in specific terms. Innovative alternatives are too often dropped for lack of means for appraising them. Estimates of the effects of conventional alternatives tend to be far more reliable. In sum, readily appraisable alternatives drive out the less appraisable, unless care is taken to protect the system from this form of error.

This implies the need for specification of the conditions under which recommendations are made. The more innovative--but less supportable--

alternative can still be presented in terms which show something of its potential. The critical thing is for the policymakers to be aware of the conditions so they may make their choices with their eyes open. They need to know as much as possible of foreseeable costs and benefits (and the probabilities of these), the bases for these predictions and what unpredicted consequences may occur--and their likelihood. This information can be supplied in some degree for most alternatives, including those which are "way out" if they are sufficiently "in" to justify sponsorship.

In cases where the evaluation of a promising alternative is especially difficult to process such as the Delphi method is useful. A selection of qualified experts are asked, individually, to answer questions about the matter at issue. Later, when their comments have been compiled, they react to the total picture offered by the combined group. In this second experience they are literally reacting to the total pattern in comparison with the answers they supplied in the first round. This may lead to another round of responses--or to a meeting of the experts. The technique is useful for developing new approaches to problems and for evaluating alternatives.

These techniques will not remove uncertainty from the policy process, of course. Incremental processes have the virtue of minimizing uncertainty, but even with them this quality is never eliminated. The more innovative the policy, the more uncertainty it offers. The kinds of changes we have noted as likely for the near future imply that uncertainty will be even more evident than it is now. This means that feedback and adjustment capability are vital in the policymaking process.

When a choice is made from among the alternatives it is important to specify the bases of choice wherever possible. Often, of course, strategy requires that the bases be hidden, but where this is not the case specification is useful. It helps reduce choices based on non-relevant

or inappropriate criteria. Certainly it is functional for the choosers to be required to specify whether a basis of their choice was minimizing risks or maximizing gains. Specification offers opportunity to precisionize goals and values.

The process of choice is inevitably a mixture of fact and value. For some areas the facts will be clear and the implications unequivocal; in others the information will be vague and extra-rational processes will be necessary. Occasionally purely random choices are useful, as the game theorists suggest, simply because such procedures keep the opposition guessing.

In any case a choice must be made. One hopes that it will be based where possible on an understanding of the alternatives involved as well as the values, goals, politics, etc., of the organization. When an alternative is chosen from among those developed it should be subjected to a test of goodness to determine whether in the minds of those close to the problem this alternative is good enough to go along with it. Here we note that the policymaking process is quite capable of churning out alternatives, choosing one and imposing it on the system when in fact it is not really a "good" solution. A good solution will fit societal needs, be politically and economically feasible, be better than its alternatives, fit into the larger organizational policy network, and be within the capability of the unit which will deal with it. A good solution also represents a test of the policy-making system since its use in the system feeds back a test of the means used to identify and choose it.

To attempt to appraise the test agency's procedures in these terms has proven to be too large a task for the time available. Despite our praiseful remarks in the previous section, the organization appears to be overly conservative in appraising alternatives, more likely to choose those which are sufficiently

in the stream of the organization's experience to evaluate them in familiar terms. This would imply that even novel ideas would be acceptable only if they can be measured in the terms (highly quantified) employed in previous situations. By this we mean only that while organization leaders might be willing to eschew incremental change upon occasion, they might still insist on appraising the innovation in the identical terms employed for all existing parts of the system. There was a high degree of similarity in the test procedures employed in the various departments explored.

We are attempting to note here the risk the organization runs of applying too limited a set of criteria to the consideration of possible innovations. The organizational policy system may actually be more creative in producing ideas for possible new directions than in creating appropriate means for appraising them. If this were the case it would represent a condition common to many (perhaps most) other organizations. If the means of appraising new ideas were more readily identifiable, a lot more new ideas would doubtless be used.

This is as much as we propose to say on the mechanics of policymaking. The process is one of developing alternatives through information analysis, brainstorming, and other means both rational and extra-rational, appraising the implications of these through these same kinds of means, and selecting the most appropriate "good" alternatives. The central idea is to use all possible means to get beyond incrementalism, to use the capacity we have to make sense out of complex data and a confusing environment. Broadly viewed, the end product should be policy which moves us further along toward goal achievement and toward the solution of the problems of the society.

## Follow-Up Processes

This section is concerned with whether, once policy is formed, a sufficient amount of organizational force is mustered to carry the policy out, and whether there is adequate feedback (and attention to feedback) to allow policy to be critiqued and adjusted in real-time terms. Policy-making is uniquely an expression of power, making it essentially a political process. Indeed, it is to reduce the political flavor of the process in the executive agencies that the attacks on incrementalism (essentially a political response) are based. All of this implied that to move from policymaking to policy execution requires surmounting the existing power configurations of the organization, or at least using them positively. It means having management systems designed to implement the policies with fidelity and survey the implementation both for deviations and for shortcomings in the policy itself.

This implies that attention must be given to policy execution even while policy is being formed, to fit policy to existing configurations of the organizations and to anticipate coalitions which may affect the implementation process. For a policy to be executed requires building a power set in the organization which included most of the power centers related to the subject of the policy. In brief warning, again, this kind of problem is the very form which so often causes conserving rather than liberating policy choices. The existing power set, built around existing policy, is a powerful force for the status quo; it is a bold and skillful maneuver that innovates in the face of such a phalanx.

To appraise the nature of coalitions and the dimension of internal power sets in the test agency would be interesting, but it is beyond the scope of this commentary. We did not get the feeling that this was an especially critical problem in this organization, in the sense of "competing camps" which are well formed around different viewpoints and which retain

their definition through time. While there are certainly coalitions around various of the existing policies and policy alternatives, these did not appear to be openly contending for power, nor did they appear to threaten the equilibrium of the organization at this time. Perhaps when a major change occurs in the top management structure such coalitions will assume greater significance than are evident at present. In these respects the agency appears fortuitous; many large public organizations are riven by internal power conflicts.

Feedback. The policy system in an organization cannot be conceived simply as means for making choices of goals and for reaching them. It involved in addition the monitoring of program execution to identify results, compare these with aspirations and adjust as needs imply. The monitoring system should identify both the expected and unexpected results and show whether any corrective action is implied and if so what. These are typical management matters and need not be considered much here except to note them as part of the process. Perhaps we can do best here by pointing out the need to be aware of the tendency for people to readjust their expectations of a policy after its results become known--thereby "reducing post-decision dissonance." Further, unexpected results are normal in new policy refinement; the policymakers should not be taken to task for them if the policy has been contrived through the use of the proper policymaking system. Indicting policymakers for unexpected results of new policy is a leading way to discourage new policy innovations. The healthy organization reduces dissonance from unexpected results by refining a policy system which is organization-wide, thereby bringing everyone into both policy successes and policy failures.

Feedback must be systematically planned, scheduled, and measured. Feedback is clearly useful for simple adjustment in program execution, but of

far more value is the opportunity to learn which a good system offers. For policymaking to reach beyond the immediate, simple, incremental adjustment great amounts of accurate information are needed. These are largely a product of effective feedback systems. Both rational and extra-rational procedures are involved. On the rational side are normal means for gathering and analyzing data and monitoring the mechanics of the system as it functions. Extra-rational processes appeared more important for the subject agency's attention. They included attacks on communication barriers, developing objective openness to reality, willingness to learn (and to be proved wrong), and matters of this nature.

We will say little more on feedback since it falls rather clearly within well established patterns of organizational behavior. In the observed agency there are excellent systems in operation for monitoring the various programs and processes. One gets a sense of an orderly world in this area, insofar as the existing programs of this organization are concerned. The agency does not appear to have given anywhere near as much attention, in a policy as against public relations sense, to feedback from its ecology on matters on which it does not have programs but to which it does relate. While public relations activities are an important feature of the total system of organizational equilibrium and perhaps even change, they will not always substitute for policy adjustments. The feedback system appears weak in this area, since it appears to "hear what it wants to hear" on some important matters. Needless to say, as we write this we find ourselves aware of many corners unturned, many reports unread, and many interviews unheld. Our knowledge of the system for handling public complaints on matters outside the central programs of the agency is far less than our critique implies. We justify our position only to the degree that the arguments set forth here offer insights for other large organizations.

### SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

In these pages we have summarized the dimensions of the policy system upon which the organization must depend for the refinement of existing programs and the creation of new ones. We do not propose to review the arguments here; rather, we will use these final paragraphs to capture a few thoughts which seem relevant as we complete this notation.

We were very much impressed with the routine workings of this organization, with the articulation of its system, the high quality of its personnel, and the real care and attention which is given to securing it and continuing it as a great public agency. Our first-hand observation of the organization-in-operation proved to be a very instructive experience of great value in their professional work. The agency seems to be more carefully organized, with far more attention to all manner of phenomena related to its operation, than we academic observers had expected to find. There is a quality all through the system which impressed us very favorably. Everyone encountered in the middle and upper management levels seemed to have a well-defined role and plenty to do--and they were flailing away at their jobs with a lot of zest!

Our reservations stem from misgivings we developed about the role interpretation of the organization. Increasingly, one found oneself thinking of this agency as a kind of "fat cat" in a hostile environment. Often during our observations we heard it said that by the original definition of the agency it was independent of its setting, not an agency of the city nor a real part of it, and with no responsibility for the city's problems.

Clearly, this is true; but through history fat cats have often been devoured by the hungry. Our personal values orient us to the view that the seriousness of the urban problems require a larger effort by all of us to

preserve our cities. While many people tend to discount social indicators which predict extremely dire developments in the big American cities, many of us believe them. Since this subject agency is clearly involved in what is happening to its city--and since the agency is going to remain headquartered there--it would seem that the organization should be giving much more attention to policies whereby it could use its resources of organizational systems, technological skills, and managerial talents to help the city turn some of its tougher corners. As one reads the local papers here one is increasingly convinced that the time left wherein the agency may use its own discretion on these matters is diminishing at a rapid rate. It is comparable to the so-called "great" corporations that are dumping corruption into the lakes, rivers, and atmosphere. They are unlikely to get away with that much longer!

The evidence indicates that the pressures on the organization to do more--and to do some of what it does in a different way--will become overwhelming. We believe the policy process in the organization should be used in part to consider the organization's possible contributions and to work out how they could be handled within the context of the agency as it exists today or as it could be altered.

This may imply the need for the addition of a few people to the staff system whose competencies are in areas different from those typically found there. We speak of such persons as social and cultural anthropologists, urbanologists, social psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists. A small team of such people would offer inhouse capability to consider ventures outside the facilities now operated, and they would offer means for improving the development of the facilities themselves. One has the feeling that the city has had more than its share of technology sans humanism of humanistic values; it might be fun to try the other way for awhile.

For this organization to include such persons in its central policy-making processes, and for it to consider even more seriously its involvement in what is happening in its area and how it may help, will impose very sharp strains on the system and it will have to develop accommodations which will be difficult for the establishment to accept. These along with the move to new space and the readily foreseeable changes in the top management of this organization are clear indicators that the agency may be entering a period of great and dramatic change. A visitor returning in ten years might find it hard to recognize the organization.

We believe the organization can handle such change. With continued careful attention to the policy process in all of its dimensions it should come out with a stronger public image and better ecological involvement as well as improved capacity to do what is being done now. The same may doubtless be said of innumerable large public agencies which are currently suffering traumas of adjustment in this period of swift change. In most of them, the policy process supplies access to the change capability the agencies need to fit in tomorrow's world.

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